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Form PTO 1390 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (REV 5-93)		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER P32374
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED / ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371		U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 C.F.R. 1.5) 10/049227
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP00/07295	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 27 July 2000	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 30 July 1999
TITLE OF INVENTION Multi-Component Pharmaceutical Dosage Form		
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Allan J. CLARKE, Teodore FONIO, Geoffrey Arthur HARRIS, Ronald KIFT, Donald LIGHTFOOT, Shane MCGINLEY, Thomas OFSHARICK, Margaret Mary SZYMCZAK		

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. ☒ This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
2. ☐ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
3. ☒ This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).
4. ☒ A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.
5. ☒ A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))
 - a. ☐ is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☐ has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☒ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
6. ☐ A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
7. ☐ Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))
 - a. ☐ are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. ☐ have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. ☐ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - d. ☐ have not been made and will not be made.
8. ☐ A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).
9. ☐ An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).
10. ☐ A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

Items 11. to 16. below concern other document(s) or information included:

11. ☒ An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. 1.97 and 1.98; and Form PTO-1449.
12. ☐ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
13. ☒ A FIRST preliminary amendment.
14. ☐ A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.
15. ☒ Please amend the specification by inserting before the first line the sentence: This is a §371 national stage entry of International Application PCT/EP00/07295, filed 27 July 2000.
16. ☐ A substitute specification.
17. ☐ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
18. ☒ An Abstract on a separate sheet of paper.
19. ☐ Other items or information.

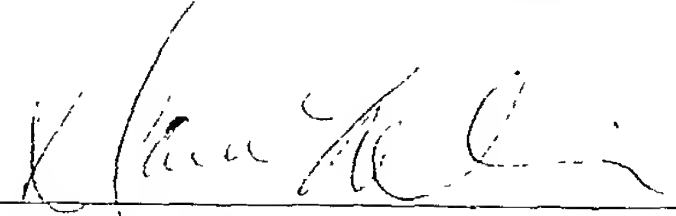
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US APPLICATION NO (if known see 37 CFR 1.50) 19-2570		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO PCT/EP00/07295		ATTORNEYS DOCKET NO P32374	
20. [X] The following fees are submitted.				CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY	
Basic National Fee (37 C.F.R. 1.492(a)(1)-(5)):				\$890.00	
Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO\$890.00					
International Preliminary Examination Fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.492)\$710.00					
No International Preliminary Examination Fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.492) but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2))\$740.00					
Neither International Preliminary Examination Fee (37 CFR 1.492) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO.....\$1,040.00					
International Preliminary Examination Fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.492) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-(4).....\$100.00					
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =				\$890.00	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).				\$0.00	
Claims	Number Filed	Number Extra	Rate		
Total claims	32 - 20 =	12	12 x \$18.00	\$216.00	
Independent claims	4 - 3 =	1	1 x \$84.00	\$84.00	
Multiple dependent claims (if applicable)			+ \$280.00	\$0.00	
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =				\$1190.00	
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity statement must also be filed. (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28).				\$	
SUBTOTAL =				\$1190.00	
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)) +				\$	
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =				\$1190.00	
				Amount to be refunded	\$
				charged	\$1190.00

- a. ☐ A check in the amount of \$_____ to cover the above fees is enclosed.
- b. ☒ Please charge my Deposit Account No. 19-2570 in the amount of **\$1190.00** to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- c. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-2570. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- d. ☒ General Authorization to charge any and all fees under 37 CFR 1.16 or 1.17, including petitions for extension of time relating to this application (37 CFR 1.136 (a)(3)).

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
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EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE: EL737849704US
DATE OF MAILING: 30 January 2002

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PATENT
ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER **P32374**

TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE U.S. DESIGNATED OFFICE
(DO/US) - ENTRY INTO NATIONAL STAGE UNDER 35 USC 371

INTERNATIONAL APP. NO.	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED
PCT/EP00/07295	27 July 2000	30 July 1999

TITLE OF INVENTION

Multi-Component Pharmaceutical Dosage Form

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/US

**Allan J. CLARKE, Teodore FONIO, Geoffrey Arthur HARRIS, Ronald KIFT,
Donald LIGHTFOOT, Shane MCGINLEY, Thomas OFSHARICK,
Margaret Mary SZYMCZAK**

Box PCT

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

ATTENTION: DO/US

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

Preliminary to calculation of the filing fees and examination of the above noted application, entrance of the following remarks and amendments into the record is respectfully requested.

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 2 to 37.

Please add the following claims:

38.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form which comprises a plurality of sub-units, each sub-unit being selected from: a drug substance-containing capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment for release of the drug substance contained in the capsule compartment, and a solid matrix comprising a polymer and containing a drug substance, the polymer being soluble, dispersible or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment for release of the drug substance contained in the solid matrix, and in which the sub-units are welded together in an assembled dosage form.

45.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which each of two adjacent sub-units is a drug substance-containing capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal

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environment, in which said adjacent sub-units are connected by a linker unit and in which at least one of said two adjacent sub-units is connected to the linker unit by one or more ultrasonic welds.

46.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which each of two adjacent sub-units is a drug substance-containing capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment, in which said adjacent sub-units are connected by a linker unit, in which at least one of said two adjacent sub-units is connected to the linker unit by one or more ultrasonic welds, and in which the wall thickness of said at least one of said adjacent sub-units is in the range of about 0.3 to 0.5 mm.

47.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which each of two adjacent sub-units is a drug substance-containing capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment, in which said adjacent sub-units are connected by a linker unit, in which at least one of said two adjacent sub-units is connected to the linker unit by one or more ultrasonic welds, and in which said at least one of said two adjacent sub-units has a frusto-conical side wall gently tapering toward an end wall, the end wall having a flattened central portion and rounded edge connecting the flattened central portion to the frusto-conical side wall.

48.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which each of two adjacent sub-units is a drug substance-containing capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment, in which said adjacent sub-units are connected by a linker unit, in which at least one of said two adjacent sub-units is connected to the linker unit by one or more ultrasonic welds, and in which said at least one of said two adjacent sub-units has a side wall and an end wall, the end wall having a flattened central portion and rounded edge connecting the flattened central portion to the side wall, the flattened central portion having a substantially planar outer surface over at least 5% of the outer surface area of the end wall.

49.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which two adjacent sub-units are connected by a linker unit, in which at least one of the two adjacent sub-units is connected to the linker unit by a connection comprising interlocking tenons and an ultrasonic shear joint.

52.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which at least one of said sub-units is formed with a first interconnecting part, and an adjacent one of said sub-units is formed with a second interconnecting part which mates in interconnecting relationship with said first interconnecting part.

54.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which at least one of said sub-units is a tub-shaped, drug substance-containing, capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment, said tub-shaped capsule compartment having a base closed by a base wall, side walls extending from said base wall, and a mouth, and in which an adjacent one of said sub-units is formed with an element which mates in interconnecting relationship with said mouth and completes the enclosure of the drug substance within said tub-shaped capsule compartment.

55.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which at least one of said sub-units is a tub-shaped, drug substance-containing, capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment, said tub-shaped capsule compartment having a base closed by a base wall, side walls extending from said base wall, and a mouth, and in which an adjacent one of said sub-units is formed with a plug which fits into said mouth and completes the enclosure of the drug substance within said tub-shaped capsule compartment.

61.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which at least two adjacent sub-units are connected together by a linker unit, to which said adjacent sub-units are welded.

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62.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which at least two adjacent sub-units are drug substance-containing capsule compartments having mouth openings facing each other, and having a linker unit with two oppositely facing plugs fitting into the mouth openings of the respective adjacent drug substance-containing capsule compartments and completing the enclosure of the drug substances in said adjacent drug substance-containing capsule compartments.

63.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which at least two adjacent sub-units are drug substance-containing capsule compartments having mouth openings facing each other, and having a linker unit with two oppositely facing plugs fitting into the mouth openings of the respective adjacent drug substance-containing capsule compartments and completing the enclosure of the drug substances in said adjacent drug substance-containing capsule compartments, the linker unit having two oppositely facing abutment surfaces, and the mouth opening of each of said adjacent sub-units having a rim engaged with one of said abutment surfaces.

64.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to claim 38 in which at least two adjacent sub-units are drug substance-containing capsule compartments having mouth openings facing each other, and having a linker unit with two oppositely facing plugs fitting into the mouth openings of the respective adjacent drug substance-containing capsule compartments and completing the enclosure of the drug substances in said adjacent drug substance-containing capsule compartments, each plug being surrounded by an annular shoulder formed in the linker unit, and the mouth opening of each of said adjacent sub-units having a rim engaged with one of said shoulders.

65.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to Claim 38 wherein the sub-units comprise at least two drug substance-containing capsule compartments having differing wall thicknesses, whereby the thinner-walled compartment is disrupted more rapidly than the thicker-walled compartment.

66.(new) A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form according to Claim 38 wherein at least one of said sub-units is a drug substance-containing capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment, a part of the last-mentioned compartment being weakened so that it dissolves preferentially.

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67.(new) A set of multi-component dosage forms, each comprising a plurality of sub-units each sub-unit being selected from:

- (a) a drug substance-containing capsule compartment which is soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment for release of the drug substance contained in the capsule compartment, and
- (b) a solid matrix comprising a polymer and containing a drug substance, the polymer being soluble, dispersible or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment for release of the drug substance contained in the solid matrix,
- in which at least one of the dosage forms of the set comprises at least one said drug substance-containing capsule compartment and at least one other dosage form of the set comprises at least one said solid matrix, in which the drug substance-containing capsule compartment of said at least one of the dosage forms is interchangeable with said solid matrix of said at least one other dosage form, and in which at least prior to administration to a patient, the sub-units of each dosage form are welded together to provide an assembled dosage form.

68.(new) A process for manufacturing a dosage form comprising a pair of drug substance-containing capsule compartments which are soluble or disintegrable in a patient's gastro-intestinal environment for release of the drug substance contained therein and a linker arranged between said capsule compartments for connecting the compartments together and having plug portions inserted into the capsule compartments and completing the enclosure of the drug substances therein, the process comprising the steps of filling one of said capsule compartments with a drug substance through an open end of said one of said capsule compartments; inserting a first plug portion of a linker into said open end of said one of said capsule compartments; welding the linker to said one of said capsule compartments; filling the other of said capsule compartments with a drug substance through an open end of said other of said capsule compartments; inserting the other plug portion of the linker into said open end of said other of said capsule compartments; and welding the linker to said other of said capsule compartments.

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is being made upon entry of International Application No. PCT/EP00/07295 in the U.S. §371 national phase of prosecution. Claim 2 to 37 have been deleted and claim 38 to 68 have been added. Claim 1 and 38 to 68 are in the application.

A marked version of the amended claims accompanies this paper.

An abstract on a separate sheet of paper accompanies this request.

(Musical notation for the first system)

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Respectfully submitted,

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Source: *Author's calculations.*

Source: *Author's calculations.*

Source: *Author's calculations.*

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ABSTRACT

A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form comprising a plurality of drug substance - containing sub-units, being capsule compartments and/or solid sub-units comprising a solid matrix of a polymer which contains a drug substance, the sub-units being connected together in the assembled dosage form by a weld between parts of the assembled dosage form.

MULTI-COMPONENT PHARMACEUTICAL DOSAGE FORM

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This invention relates to pharmaceutical formulations, being a dosage form comprising two or more connected sub-units, particularly for oral dosing.

Various types of pharmaceutical dosage form are known for oral dosing.

5 Pharmaceutical capsules are well known, generally being intended for oral dosing. Such capsules generally comprise an envelope wall of a pharmaceutically acceptable, e.g. orally ingestible, polymer material such as gelatin, although other materials for capsule walls, e.g. starch and cellulose based polymers are also known. Such capsules generally have soft walls made by making a film on a capsule
10 former, which is then allowed to dry. Rigid walled capsules made by injection moulding are also known, see for example US 4576284, US 4591475, US 4655840, US 4738724, US 4738817 and US 4790881 (all to Warner Lambert). These disclose specific constructions of capsules made of gelatin, starch and other polymers, and methods of making them by injection moulding of hydrophilic polymer - water
15 mixtures. US 4576284 specifically discloses such capsules provided with a cap which closes the capsule, and which is formed in situ on the filled capsule by moulding. US 4738724 discloses a wide range of rigid capsule shapes and parts.

Multi-compartment capsules, including those of the type where each compartment has different drug release characteristics or for example contains a
20 different drug substance or formulation are also known, for example in US 4738724 (Warner-Lambert), US 5672359 (University of Kentucky), US 5443461 (Alza Corp.), WO 9516438 (Cortecs Ltd.), WO 9012567 (Helminthology Inst.), DE-A-3727894, BE 900950 (Warner Lambert), FR 2524311, NL 7610038 (Tapanhony NV), FR 28646 (Pluripharma), US 3228789 (Glassman), US 3186910 (Glassman)
25 among others. US 4738817 discloses a multicompartment capsule with a similar construction to those of US 3228789 and US 3186910, made of a water-plasticised gelatin.

Pharmaceutical dosage forms are also known which comprise a matrix of a solid polymer, in which a drug substance is dispersed, embedded or dissolved as a
30 solid solution. Such matrixes may be formed by an injection moulding process. This technology is discussed in Cuff G, and Raouf F, Pharmaceutical Technology June 1998 p 96-106. Some specific formulations for such dosage forms are for

example disclosed in US 4,678,516; US 4,806,337; US 4,764,378; US 5,004,601; US 5,135,752; US 5,244,668; US 5,139,790; US 5,082,655 among others; in which a polyethylene glycol ("PEG") matrix is used and solid dosage forms are made by injection moulding.

5 The content of the above-mentioned background publications is incorporated herein by way of reference.

 It is an object of this invention to provide an alternative and improved pharmaceutical dosage form which provides inter alia greater flexibility in producing a dosage form adapted to a patient's specific administration requirement, and to ease of manufacture. Other objects and advantages of the invention will be
10 apparent from the following description.

 According to this invention a multi-component dosage form is provided which comprises a plurality of drug substance – containing sub-units each selected from capsule compartments which can release their drug substance in the gastro-
15 intestinal environment, and solid sub-units comprising a solid matrix of a polymer which contains a drug substance, the polymer being soluble, dispersible or disintegrable in the patient's gastro-intestinal environment to thereby release the drug substance, the sub-units being connected together in the assembled dosage form and being retained together by the connection at least prior to administration
20 to a patient, wherein the connection is provided by a weld between parts of the assembled dosage form.

 The connectable nature of these sub-units advantageously enables various sub-units having different drug release characteristics and/or contents to be assembled and connected together to produce a dosage form. In a preferred form the
25 sub-units have common interchangeable interconnectable parts so that the sub-units of the invention may be assembled in various combinations using the same basic units of capsule compartments, solid sub-units, or of solid sub-units and capsule compartments. This can facilitate the rapid prototyping of a dosage form comprising a combination of different drug substances in respective sub-units, and/or
30 combinations of the same or different drug substances with different release characteristics, whilst simplifying the formulation procedure.

In a first embodiment of this invention the pharmaceutical dosage form comprises a plurality of capsule compartments each bounded and physically separated from at least one adjacent compartment by a wall made of a pharmaceutically acceptable polymer material, adjacent compartments being
5 connected together in the assembled dosage form and being retained together by the connection at least prior to administration to a patient, one or more of the compartments containing a drug substance, and wherein the connection is provided by a weld between parts of the assembled dosage form, suitably between immediately adjacent parts.

10 Suitably in the assembled dosage form of this first embodiment there are at
least two, for example three, such capsule compartments. Three or more such
compartments may be linearly disposed in the assembled dosage form, e.g. in an
arrangement comprising two end compartments at opposite ends of the line, and one
or more intermediate compartments. Suitably there may be two such capsule
15 compartments.

In a second embodiment of this invention the pharmaceutical dosage form comprises a plurality of drug-containing sub-units connected together in the assembled dosage form and being retained together by the connection at least prior to administration to a patient, at least one of the sub-units being a solid sub-unit comprising a solid matrix of a polymer which contains a drug substance, the polymer being soluble, dispersible or disintegrable in the patient's gastro-intestinal environment to thereby release the drug substance, and wherein the connection is provided by a weld between parts of the assembled dosage form.

In one form of this second embodiment all of the sub-units in the dosage
 25 form of this invention may be solid sub-units, e.g. two or more such solid sub-
 units, e.g. three such solid sub-units.

In another form of this second embodiment, one or more of the sub-units comprise a solid sub-unit, and one or more of the other sub-units may comprises a capsule compartment bounded by a wall made of a pharmaceutically acceptable polymer material, one or more of the said capsule compartments containing a drug substance.

In one embodiment one or more, e.g. all, of the sub-units may for example be substantially cylindrical, which term includes shapes which have a circular, oval or oblate circular cross section across the longitudinal axis, and shapes which have parallel or tapering e.g. with side walls which taper conically over at least part of their extent. Solid sub-units may also be substantially cylindrical in shape. Such substantially cylindrical sub-units may be provided with connectable parts at one or both of their longitudinally disposed ends so that the assembled dosage form may also be overall of a substantially cylindrical shape.

25 A preferred form of the multi-component dosage form of this invention
comprises two capsule compartments.

The invention also provides individual sub-units, e.g. individual capsule compartments or solid sub-units adapted for use in the assembled dosage form.

In the assembled dosage form the adjacent sub-units, whether capsule
30 compartments, solid sub-units or combinations thereof, are connected together by
means of a weld at the area where two adjacent parts of the dosage form, e.g. sub-
units, are in contact, e.g. a thermal weld, an ultrasonic or inductive weld, or an

adhesive weld (e.g. curable adhesives such as UV curable adhesive). A thermal weld may for example be achieved by bringing sub-units into adjacent contact and applying localised heating for example produced by directing a laser beam or a fine jet of hot gas e.g. nitrogen at the area where two adjacent sub-units are in contact.

5 In thermal, inductive and ultrasonic welding normally localised fusion together of the materials of adjacent parts of the dosage form which are in contact occurs, and on subsequent solidification of the materials a bond is formed between the adjacent parts. An adhesive weld may be achieved by applying an adhesive (e.g. curable adhesives such as UV curable adhesive) to parts of the dosage form which when the dosage form is assembled are in contact, and then causing or allowing the adhesive to set.

The multi-component dosage form of the present invention is particularly suited to fabrication using ultrasonic welding.

Ultrasonic welding is a known technique involving the use of high frequency sound energy to soften or melt a thermoplastic material at the site where a joint with the material is required. A general description of ultrasonic welding is for example to be found in the publication "Ultrasonic Welding of Thermoplastics" (TWI Ltd., Abington, Cambridgeshire GB, (1997)). Parts to be joined are held together under pressure and then subjected to ultrasonic vibrations usually at a frequency of 20 – 40 kHz. The actual mechanism responsible for the generation of heat at the joint site is not well understood. An ultrasonic welding machine comprises five main components, being a power supply, a control system, a welding head, fixturing to hold the parts to be welded, and a system to apply the required pressure. The power supply converts electricity into high frequency electric power which drives a transducer, e.g. a piezoelectric transducer, which converts electrical energy, e.g. from the mains supply, into mechanical, i.e. ultrasonic, energy. Between the transducer and the parts to be welded is located a booster and horn system, being a usually metallic component which serves to amplify the ultrasonic waves (the booster horn), transmit the clamping pressure, and deliver the sound energy to the part to be welded (the sonotrode or welding horn). For successful ultrasonic welding careful design of the parts to be welded and set up of the welding equipment is important.

screw or other kind of interlocking fit. If for example these plug and socket parts are common then any plug part on any solid sub-unit or capsule compartment may interconnect with any socket part on another solid sub-unit or capsule compartment.

In a friction fit for example the plug part may be slightly larger than the
 5 socket such that force needs to be applied against the natural resilience and contact friction of the plug and socket parts to cause the plug part to enter the socket, and similar force needs to be applied to separate them. In a snap fit for example the plug and socket parts may be respectively provided with a concavity and a corresponding convexity, such as a ridge and groove, which lock together as the parts are forced
 10 together against the natural resilience of the parts. Such a ridge and groove may for example comprise a co-operating circumferential or part circumferential bead and groove, for example located about the circumference of a connectable plug and socket part.

Above-mentioned US 4576284 and US 4738724 for example, the contents of
 15 which are included herein in their entirety by way of reference, disclose a range of interlocking parts of this general type by means of which capsule compartments may be made to interlock together. See for example Figs. 1, 2 and 3 of US 4576284 which discloses interlocking parts by means of which a cap may be retained on the mouth of a capsule, and Figs. 4 – 43 of US 4738724 which disclose numerous
 20 interlocking parts by means of which part capsule shells may interlock and be retained together as an assembled complete capsule.

The above-described first and second connectable parts facilitate assembly of sub-units together in various ways.

For example in a dosage form of the invention comprising a linear
 25 disposition of three or more e.g. four, sub-units, an intermediate sub-unit may be provided with one or more connectable parts for example one at each end, which may connect with one or more connectable part on an adjacent intermediate sub-unit. An end sub-unit may be provided with one or more connectable part which may connect with a connectable part on an adjacent intermediate sub-unit and/or
 30 with one or more connectable part on another end sub-unit. By means of this two end sub-units may connect together in a dosage form comprising two sub-units, or two end sub-units may be connected to one or more intermediate sub-units. By

using common first and second connectable parts on the sub-units the various end and intermediate sub-units may be made such that they may be connected together in various combinations of assembled dosage forms.

One or more sub-unit which is a capsule compartments may for example be substantially tub-shaped, i.e. having a base closed by a base wall, and side walls extending from the base wall (herein referred to as an "upward" direction), and an upper open mouth. With such a construction capsule compartments may connect together by the base of a first compartment fitting into the open mouth of an adjacent second capsule compartment, so as to close the mouth of the adjacent capsule compartment, and such that the base wall of the first compartment physically separates the compartments. In such a construction the base of the first compartment comprises a plug connectable part, and the mouth opening of the second compartment comprises a socket connectable part.

One or more solid sub-unit may for example be shaped so as to fit as a plug into or a cap over the open mouth of an adjacent capsule compartment so as to function as a closure for the mouth. Alternatively one or more solid sub-unit and the outer surface of the base wall of a capsule compartment may be shaped so as to fit adjacent to and connect with each other. For example the base of such a tub-shaped capsule compartment may be provided externally with a plug or socket part and an adjacent solid sub-unit may be provided externally with a corresponding interconnecting socket or plug part. One or more capsule compartment may be formed with a base part that can connect with the mouth opening of an adjacent capsule compartment so as to function as a closure for the mouth in the above-described manner.

For example the base part of the first compartment may be shaped to engage with an adjacent solid sub-unit, e.g. by forming a socket engagement part on the adjacent part of the solid sub-unit which can engage the base of the capsule compartment. A weld between the sub-units may then be formed in the region of contact e.g. between the base of the first compartment or a solid sub-unit, and the mouth of the second compartment. Additionally or alternatively for example the sub-units may be provided with connectable parts to enable a retaining friction, snap, screw or other kind of interlocking fit.

Alternatively a capsule end compartment can be provided with some other type of closure for its mouth opening, particularly if it is connected by its base to an adjacent sub-unit. The closure may for example be made from the same, or a different, polymer than the polymer material of the compartment. This closure may for example comprise an over-cap for example fitting around the outer surface of the side walls of the compartment, as in the general manner disclosed in US 4196565 or US 4250097 or alternatively the closure may comprise a plug type of closure. Above-mentioned US 4576284 discloses some suitable types of closure for capsule compartments which are suitable for use with the present invention. The closure may be retained in place on the mouth opening of its compartment by a weld e.g. as described above, or additionally or alternatively the closure and mouth opening may be provided with features to enable a retaining friction, snap, screw or other kind of interlocking fit.

Alternative ways of assembling and connecting the sub-units are encompassed within the scope of the invention.

For example one or more capsule compartments may be made in the form of two part compartment shells, each part compartment shell comprising a closed end and side walls and having a mouth opening opposite the closed end, which connect
30 together, e.g. by the means discussed above, with their mouth openings facing, to form the capsule compartment, and one or both of the closed ends may have an

external connectable part. One or both of the closed ends may connect with an adjacent sub-unit, which may be a solid sub-unit or a capsule compartment, e.g. by the means discussed above. For example if the dosage form comprises a linear assembly of sub-units one or both closed ends of an intermediate capsule compartment(s) may be connectable to an end sub-unit. For example each end sub-unit may be a substantially tub-shaped capsule compartment as described above and may have a mouth opening that is connectable to the closed end in the manner described above, or may be a solid sub-unit.

For example the dosage form may include one or more linker unit positioned between adjacent pairs of sub-units. At least one weld in the dosage form may be between a sub-unit and such a linker unit. Such a linker unit may for example have connectable parts which are connectable to the above-mentioned first and/or second connectable parts on the adjacent sub-units. Suitably to facilitate a linear assembly of sub-units in the dosage form a linker unit may have its connectable parts in opposite linear facing directions. Suitably such a linker unit may comprise a closure for the mouth opening of a capsule compartment, e.g. connecting with the capsule compartment in the manner of a plug or a cap for its mouth opening, and having a connectable part enabling connection to an adjacent sub-unit, e.g. another capsule compartment.

In a specific form the linker may have one or two connectable parts which connect with the mouth opening of a capsule compartment. For example such a linker may have two connectable parts which are opposite facing plug parts and which can connect in a plug and socket manner with the mouth opening of two oppositely-facing capsule compartments to thereby form a capsule-linker-capsule assembly. Suitably welds, e.g. ultrasonic welds, may be formed between both of the capsule compartments and the linker between them in such a dosage form.

When for example a capsule compartment has a closure for its mouth opening, then this closure may comprise a linker having one or more first and/or second connectable parts such that the first or second part on the closure may connect with respectively the second or first part on an adjacent sub-unit in a suitable configuration.

For example in one form such a closure may be provide with two oppositely-facing plug connectable parts which can connect with two socket connectable parts on adjacent sub-units, e.g. the mouth openings of opposite-facing capsule compartments. Such a closure can thereby act as a linker between two capsule compartments with their mouth openings oppositely facing, in a capsule compartment – linker – capsule compartment linear arrangement. For example this arrangement may be an end compartment – linker – end compartment arrangement.

Other ways in which such a linker may be used in a dosage form of the invention will be apparent. For example an intermediate capsule compartment may be in the form of a generally cylindrical shape with two oppositely facing open ends, and two linkers may connect via respectively one each of their connectable parts with an open end of the cylinder, leaving the other connectable part available for connection to respectively another sub-unit.

For forming an ultrasonic weld between adjacent parts of the dosage form of this invention, it is preferred that adjacent parts of the dosage form between which the ultrasonic weld is formed, for example of adjacent contacting, capsule compartments and/or solid sub units, or of adjacent contacting parts of a linker and a capsule compartment or solid unit, in particular of end capsule compartments with a linker in between, are profiled and dimensioned to facilitate an ultrasonic shear joint. A shear joint is one type of weld structure which can be used in ultrasonic welding of polymer materials. Adjacent parts to be brought into contact and welded are dimensioned and profiled to provide a small initial contact area, then a controlled interference occurs along the joint as the parts collapse together under the application of ultrasonic energy.

For example a suitable profile is provided by plug and socket connectable parts comprising engaging tenon parts (e.g. opposite facing complementary steps), where the length of one tenon is less than the length of the other tenon part, and under the ultrasonic welding operation the material of the parts can collapse until the tenon parts longitudinally engage.

The multicomponent dosage form of this invention comprising a capsule compartment – linker – capsule compartment in a linear arrangement and connected together by means of at least one ultrasonic weld formed between a capsule

compartment and the linker is a particular form of this invention, and some preferred features of this form are discussed below.

Advantageous features of the capsule compartments have been devised to facilitate assembly and/or ultrasonic welding of the dosage form of this invention.

5 The wall of the capsule compartment is preferably ca. 0.1 – 0.8mm, especially 0.3–0.5mm, thick, at least in the cylindrical side walls of the compartment, this thickness being generally found suitable as a minimum to reduce the risk of damage to the compartment by the ultrasonic energy during the welding operation. A thickness of 0.45 ± 0.05 mm is particularly preferred as a balance
10 between strength for welding and drug content release. The end compartments in such a two compartment capsule are suitably each in the shape of a cylinder having one open end and one closed end. The closed end is suitably closed by a generally rounded, e.g. hemispherical end wall, e.g. an open ended “bucket” or “tub” shape. Suitably the side walls taper gently in a shallow conical fashion, the cross section
15 being greatest at the open end (e.g. inter alia to facilitate removal from an injection mould). Suitably the central part of the rounded end of such a bucket or tub shape may be flattened to facilitate the application of ultrasonic energy during the welding operation.

Preferably at least one, preferably both, of the connectable parts of the
20 linker is a plug part which fits in a plug-and-socket manner into the open end of a capsule compartment. Therefore such a plug part is typically a cylindrical shape, corresponding closely to the internal shape of the open end of a capsule compartment adjacent to the open end.

Preferably the linker is in the form of a solid wall part with oppositely
25 facing plug connectable parts, oppositely facing end surfaces of the plug parts extending generally transverse to the longitudinal direction of the linker. Preferably each plug part is a snug friction fit into the open end of a capsule compartment. Preferably each plug part is provided with an abutment surface to define and limit the extent to which each plug part can extend into the open end of a capsule
30 compartment by abutting against the rim of the open end of a capsule compartment when the plug part extends to a suitable extent into the capsule mouth.

In a preferred construction, the linker comprises a generally cylindrical solid body, its opposite facing ends being plug parts, with two oppositely facing abutment surfaces each being a surface of a ledge formed around the circumference of the cylindrical body and generally planar in a plane perpendicular to the length direction. Such a ledge may typically be ring shaped with its plane perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the capsule. With such a linker the assembled dosage form may comprise two capsule compartments each in the shape of a cylinder having one open end and one closed end (e.g. the above-described tub or bucket shapes), with their open ends in an opposite facing relationship, with a linker between them with each of the opposite facing plug parts of the linker fitting in a plug-and-socket manner into the open end of a capsule compartment, with an ultrasonic weld formed between a plug part and/or an abutment surface of the linker and the compartment wall in the vicinity of the open end, e.g. the rim of the open end.

Another assembled dosage form may comprise three capsule compartments, two being end compartments each in the shape of a cylinder having one open end and one closed end, with their open ends in an opposite facing relationship, with an intermediate compartment longitudinally between the two end compartments, with a linker between each end compartment and the intermediate compartment and with each of the opposite facing plug parts of the linker fitting in a plug-and-socket manner into the open end of a capsule compartment, with an ultrasonic weld formed between a plug part and/or an abutment surface of the linker and the compartment wall in the vicinity of the open end, e.g. the rim of the open end.

Advantageous features of the linker have also been devised to facilitate assembly and/or ultrasonic welding of the dosage form of this invention.

Preferably the linker is overall in the form of a cylindrical body flattened in its length direction, for example having diameter : length ratios in the range 4 : 1 to 1.5 : 1. The body may have an end surface which is substantially planar over at least 50% of its extent to facilitate ultrasonic welding as such a planar surface is found to assist in the transmission of ultrasonic energy from a welding horn to the area where the ultrasonic weld is to be formed when the plug part of the linker is fitted into the open end. For example such a planar surface may be a ring-shaped

surface surrounding a central concavity. In a multi-capsule compartment of this invention which is of the order of size of conventional capsules it appears to be advantageous for such a planar surface to extend continuously over a dimension of at least 2 mm, e.g. over at least 4mm² area to allow ultrasonic energy to be applied to such a surface by means of an ultrasonic welding horn whilst minimising the risk of damaging, e.g. cracking, the linker. Also it appears to be advantageous for the linker to have a length of at least 2mm to allow ultrasonic energy to be applied to the linker by means of an ultrasonic welding horn whilst minimising the risk of damaging the linker. Similarly with a capsule compartment wall the shape of a cylinder having one open end and one closed end, it is again preferred that at least 5% of the outer surface of the closed end is substantially planar, to facilitate the application of ultrasonic energy. Again it appears to be advantageous for such a planar surface to extend continuously over a dimension of at least 2 mm e.g. over at least 4mm² area.

15 A plug part of such a linker may typically have a length of up to ca. 45% of the length of the linker, e.g. up to ca. 25%.

Generally for the ultrasonic welding operation to form an ultrasonic weld in a multicomponent dosage form of the above-described type comprising a capsule compartment – linker – capsule compartment in a linear arrangement, of a size typical of a pharmaceutical capsule, a conventional (e.g. Branson, Rainbow) ultrasonic welding machine operating at 20-40 KHz can produce a suitable weld in ca. 500ms.

The assembly and ultrasonic welding of the multicomponent dosage form of the above-described type comprising a capsule compartment – linker – capsule compartment in a linear arrangement may comprise the steps of first filling a first capsule compartment with a suitable quantity of drug substance; insertion of a first plug part of a linker into the open end of the first capsule compartment and welding this in place; filling a second capsule compartment containing a suitable quantity of drug substance; insertion of the opposite, second, plug part of the linker into the open end of the second capsule compartment and welding the linker and second capsule compartment together. The weld is preferably an ultrasonic weld.

The parts of the dosage form of this invention, e.g. a capsule compartment wall, a solid sub-unit, or a closure or linker as described above may comprise any pharmaceutically acceptable polymer (and adhesive material if adhesive welds are formed) which is generally regarded as safe, e.g. for oral injection and is capable of being formed into the required shape of a capsule compartment wall, a solid sub-unit, or a closure or linker as described above. A preferred method of forming the polymer material into the desired shape is injection moulding, which may be a hot or cold runner injection moulding process. Suitable injection moulding machines for such a process are known.

10 In the process of injection moulding a fluid polymer is injected under pressure into a precisely made die cavity in a mould block. Injection moulding processes can enable the sub-units to be made with the precision necessary to achieve connection by tight friction-fit or snap-fit interlocking and to maintain suitable contact between adjacent parts to facilitate a weld. Suitable techniques of injection moulding are known from for example the art of manufacture of small plastic components e.g. small parts of LEGO™ toys. Processes such as those described in Cuff. G and Raouf. F (op. cit.) may be used to manufacture such solid sub-units and capsule compartments via injection moulding.

20 Consequently the invention also provides a moulding process, for example an injection moulding or powder compression process, wherein sub-units, including the solid sub-units and capsule compartments of the dosage form are made in respective mould cavities.

The invention also provides a mould or die, for example an injection mould or powder compression mould or die suitable for use in this moulding process. Such a mould or die may have a mould cavity corresponding to the shape of the sub-unit. Moulds may be made by known metal engraving processes such as spark-erosion, and it is generally preferred to use moulds made from pharmaceutically acceptable metals e.g. steels of the type known for use in tablet compression dyes.

30 Suitable polymers for the parts of the dosage form of this invention include: polyvinyl alcohol (PVA), natural polymers (such as polysaccharides like pullulan, carrageenan, xanthan, chitosan or agar gums), polyethylene glycols (PEG), polyethylene oxides (PEO), mixtures of PEGs and PEOs,

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hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC), methylcellulose, hydroxyethylcellulose, hydroxyethyl methylcellulose, hydroxypropylcellulose, methacrylic acid copolymer (such as Eudragit ETM, Eudragit LTM and/or Eudragit STM), ammonium methacrylate copolymers (such as Eudragit RLTM and/or Eudragit RSTM), carboxymethylcellulose, 5 povidone (polyvinyl pyrrolidone), polyglycolysed glycerides (such as Gelucire 44/14TM, Gelucire 50/02TM, Gelucire 50/13TM and Gelucire 53/10TM), carboxyvinyl polymers (such as CarbopolsTM), polyoxyethylene-polyoxypropylene copolymers (such as Poloxamer 188TM).

Acrylic and/or methacrylic acid-based polymers which are soluble in 10 intestinal fluids and which can be formed into capsules are for example disclosed in US 5705189 (Roehm GmbH) the content of which is incorporated herein by reference. The EudragitTM polymers discussed above for example are extrudable and may for example be plasticised with e.g. triethyl citrate, or glyceryl monostearate.

15 It is also known to form solid bodies suitable for the solid sub-units of this invention using processes of powder compression. For such processes amylose, cross-linked amylose and amylose-pectin combinations may be suitable.

Preferred polymers are orally ingestible polymers and include polyvinyl alcohol, hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, and other cellulose-based polymers. 20 Preferred polymers also include polymer materials which preferentially dissolve or disintegrate at different points in the digestive tract. Such polymers include the known acrylic and/or methacrylic acid-based polymers which are soluble in intestinal fluids, e.g. the EudragitTM series of commercially available polymers. Examples of these include Eudragit ETM, such as Eudragit E 100TM, which 25 preferentially dissolves in the more acid pH of the stomach, or enteric polymers such as Eudragit LTM and/or Eudragit STM which preferentially dissolve in the more alkaline pH of the intestine, and Preferred polymers also include polymers which dissolve slowly, e.g. a predetermined rate in the digestive tract, such as Eudragit RLTM, e.g. Eudragit RL 100TM, and/or Eudragit RSTM e.g. Eudragit R100TM, and/or 30 blends of such EudragitTM polymers.

The polymer material(s) may include other substances to modify their properties and to adapt them to various applications, including for example the

following general classes of substances. Surfactants, such as Polysorbate 80™, sodium lauryl sulphate, and Polyoxyl 40™ hydrogenated castor oil. Absorption enhancers, such as Labrasol™, Transcutol™; glidants, such as stearyl alcohol, talc, magnesium stearate, silicon dioxide, amorphous silicic acid, fumed silica, Simeticone™; plasticizers, such as triethyl citrate, acetyl triethyl citrate, tributyl citrate, acetyl tributyl citrate, glyceryl monostearate, diethyl phthalate, dibutyl phthalate, propylene glycol, triacetin and castor oil; substances for release modification, such as ethyl cellulose and cellulose acetate phthalate; disintegrants, such as sodium starch glycollate, croscarmellose sodium, crospovidone (cross-linked polyvinyl pyrrolodone), colouring agents, flavouring agents and sweetening agents.

The sub-units may additionally include materials in the polymer materials of which they are made to enhance the ease with which they can be welded together. The sub-units may additionally be provided with constructional features and/or include materials in the polymer materials of which they are made to enhance the ease with which they can be welded together, e.g. opacifier materials such as carbon (e.g. 0.2-0.5%), iron oxides or titanium dioxide (e.g. 0.5-1.0%) to help the polymer to absorb laser energy. Such opacifier materials are generally regarded as safe.

For example each of a plurality of sub units, e.g. of capsule compartments, solid sub-units, or combinations thereof may comprise the same or different polymer.

For example each of a plurality of sub units, e.g. of capsule compartments, solid sub-units, or combinations thereof may comprise the same or different drug substance.

For example each sub-unit may contain the same drug substance but releasable in the gastro-intestinal tract of the patient at a different rate, at different times after administration to the patient or at different places in the patient's gastro-intestinal system. Alternatively each sub-unit may contain a different drug substance, each of which may be released at the same or a different rate or time after administration or place in the patient's gastro-intestinal system.

For example two or more sub-units, e.g. two capsule compartments, may each contain different drug substances, and/or different drug substance formulations, and/or the same drug in different formulations, so that a combination of two or more drug substances or formulations may be administered to a patient.

5 The dosage form of this invention enables the assembly together of sub-units which differ in their drug content and/or drug content release characteristics to provide a dosage form tailored to specific administration requirements.

 The dimensions and shape of each of the sub-units and hence of the overall assembled dosage form may be determined by the nature and quantity of the
10 material to be contained therein and the intended mode of administration and intended recipients. For example a dosage form intended for oral administration may be of a shape and size similar to that of known capsules intended for oral administration.

 The dosage form is particularly suitable for presentation as an oral dosage
15 form containing one or more drug substances suitable for oral administration, and appears to be suitable for all types of such drug substance.

 As explained in Cuff G. and Raouf F. (op.cit.), in the matrix of solid sub-units the drug substance may be present in various states. For example it may comprise discrete particles dispersed in the matrix, for example in the case of
20 particles that do not readily dissolve in the fluid polymer. Alternatively the drug substance may be present as a solid solution in the solid polymer of the matrix. Alternatively some of the drug substance may comprise discrete particles and some may be present as a solid solution in the polymer. When two or more solid sub-units are present the drug substance present in each solid sub-unit may be in the
25 same or in different states, e.g. having different drug substance release characteristics.

 The drug substance(s) contained in any capsule compartment may be present in any suitable, e.g. conventional, form, e.g. as a powder, granules, compact, microcapsules, gel, syrup or liquid provided that the capsule compartment wall
30 material is sufficiently inert to the liquid content of the latter three forms. The contents of the compartments, e.g. drug substances, may be introduced into the

compartments by standard methods such as those used conventionally for filling capsules, such as dosating pins or die filling.

The sub-units may differ from each other in their drug content release characteristics, and this may be achieved in various ways.

5 For example one or more solid sub-units and/or capsule compartments may be substantially immediate release, i.e. releasing their drug content substantially immediately upon injection or on reaching the stomach. This may for example be achieved by means of the matrix polymer or the capsule compartment wall dissolving, disintegrating or otherwise being breached to release the drug content
10 substantially immediately. Generally, immediate-release sub-units are preferably provided by being capsule compartments.

For example one or more solid sub-units and/or capsule compartments may be sustained-release sub-units. Preferably these are solid sub-units, as a bulk matrix of polymer is likely to dissolve or disperse more slowly to release its drug content
15 that a thin walled capsule.

For example one or more solid sub-units and/or capsule compartments may be pulsed-release sub-units for example releasing their drug content at a specific predetermined point in a patient's gastro-intestinal system. This may be achieved by the use of polymer materials which dissolve or disperse only at defined pH
20 environments, such as the above mentioned Eudragit™ polymers.

In the case of the above-described linear arrangement of sub-units, suitably one of the end sub-units, particularly a capsule compartment may be a substantially immediate-release compartment, so that the disruption of this end sub-unit has little or no influence on the other sub-units, e.g. the other end sub-unit or the
25 intermediate sub-unit(s), in the assembly. In such a case the other end and the intermediate sub-unit(s) may be delayed or pulse release sub-units, i.e. releasing their drug content at a delayed time after administration. For example in the case of oral administration these delayed release sub-units may release their drug content in the stomach, small or large intestine.

30 For example in the above-described capsule compartment-linker-capsule compartment dosage form one capsule compartment may be effectively immediate release and the other may be sustained, delayed or pulsed release. To achieve this

determine the time of onset and/or rate of release of the drug substance content.

For example such points of weakness may comprise holes, e.g. small holes, e.g.

laser-drilled holes in the compartment wall or the closure, these holes being closed and/or covered with a film of a polymer material that dissolves at a pre-determined

5 point in the digestive tract, for example an enteric polymer material. For example such points of weakness may comprise thinned parts in a capsule compartment wall formed during the moulding operation in which the capsule compartment is formed.

The sub-units may additionally or alternatively have surface or other constructional features which modify their drug release characteristics. For example
10 solid sub-units may be provided with internal cavities or channels to create a large surface area. For example solid sub-units may be in the form of hollow cylinders, donuts, or toroids, which shapes are known to tend towards first-order dissolution or erosion in liquid media and correspondingly to tend toward first-order release of drug content dispersed therein.

15 The invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to:

Fig.1 which shows a longitudinal sectional view of a dosage form of the invention assembled together.

Fig. 2 which shows a longitudinal sectional view of another dosage form of
20 the invention assembled together.

Fig. 3 which shows a longitudinal sectional view of another dosage form of the invention assembled together.

Fig.4 which shows a longitudinal sectional view of a dosage form of the invention assembled together.

25 Fig. 5 which shows a longitudinal sectional view of another dosage form of the invention assembled together.

Fig. 6 which shows longitudinal and cross sections, and an enlarged part view of another dosage form of the invention.

Fig. 7 which shows an assembly sequence of a dosage form of Fig. 6.

30 Referring to Fig. 1, a dosage form 11 is shown comprising three sub-units 12, 13, 14 linearly disposed in the assembled dosage form, in an arrangement comprising two end compartments 12, 14 at opposite ends of the line, and one

intermediate solid sub-unit 13. The compartments 12 and 14 and the solid sub-unit 13 are substantially cylindrical. The compartments 12 and 14 are substantially tub-shaped, i.e. each having a base closed by a base wall 12A, 14A, and each having side walls 2B, 4B extending upward from the base wall 12A, 14A, and an upper open mouth. Each of the compartments 12 and 14 is made of polyvinyl alcohol polymer by injection moulding.

The solid sub-unit 13 is also substantially cylindrical, and has its base end 13A formed into a plug shape capable of engaging with and thereby closing the open mouth of either compartment 12 or 14. As shown in Fig. 1 the base end 13A of solid sub-unit 13 fits into and is in engagement with the mouth opening of compartment 14. The upper end of solid sub-unit 13 has its upper end 13B formed into a socket connector capable of engaging with the shape of the base 12A or 14A of capsule compartment 12 or 14, as shown in Fig. 1 being in engagement with the base of compartment 12.

The compartments 12, 14 and solid sub-unit 13 connect together by the base 12A of compartment 12 fitting into the upper socket 13B of adjacent solid sub-unit 13, and the base 12A of the solid sub-unit 13, fitting into the open mouth of adjacent compartment 14 so as to close its mouth. In this assembly of sub-units 12, 13, 14 the base part of an upper sub-unit 12, 13 comprises a plug part and the mouth opening or upper socket of a lower sub-unit respectively 13, 14 comprises a socket.

Compartment 14 is an end compartment 13 and has its mouth opening closed by the base end 13A of solid sub-unit 13. The other upper end compartment 12 is closed by a closure 15 having a plug part 16 which is dimensioned to fit into the mouth opening of the compartment 12.

The base parts 12A and 13A and the plug part 16, fit into the respective mouth openings of the compartments 12 and 14. A thermal weld is formed between the base parts 12A and 13A, the plug part 16, and the respective mouth openings and upper socket of the compartments 12, 14 and the solid sub-unit 13 at the region where these parts are in contact. Each of the base parts 12A, 13A, and the plug part 16, and the corresponding respective mouth openings and upper socket of the compartments 12, 13 and 14 may additionally or alternatively be provided with

features (not shown) such as a convex circumferential bead and a corresponding circumferential groove into which the bead may fit, such that the base part 12A, 13A, the mouth openings of the compartments 12 and 14, the upper socket 13B and the plug part 16 and mouth opening of compartment 12 may connect together by a
5 snap fit interlocking engagement overcoming the natural resilience of the polymer material of the base part and mouth opening.

A thermal weld may be formed between the base parts 12A and 13A, the plug part 16, and the respective mouth openings and upper socket of the compartments 12, 14 and the solid sub-unit 13, by directing a laser beam to the
10 region where these parts are in contact.

The base parts 12A, 13A, 14A of the compartments 12, 13, 14, the mouth openings of the compartments 12 and 14, the upper socket 3B and the plug part 16 are all of common dimensions so that the compartments 12 and 14 and the solid sub-unit may be fitted together in other linear combinations, and so that the plug 15
15 may be used to close the mouth opening of the other compartments 14.

Similarly, two or more than the three sub-units 12, 13 or 14, may be connected together in an analogous manner to that shown in Fig 1.

Fig. 2 shows another dosage form assembly 21. This assembly 21 also comprises three sub-units 22, 23, 24 in a linear assembly of an end compartment
20 22, an intermediate compartment 23 and an end solid sub-unit 24. The intermediate compartment 23 is made in the form of part compartment shells 23A and 23B, each part shell 23A, 23B comprising a closed end 23C and 23D and side walls 23E and 23F with a mouth opening opposite each closed end 23C and 23D. The mouth openings of the two part shells 23A and 23B are each provided respectively with a
25 plug connectable part 25 and a socket connectable part 26. These part shells 23A, 23B connect together with their respective plug and socket parts 25 and 26 connecting to form the capsule compartment 23. Both of the closed ends 23C, 23D are externally provided with connectable parts 27, 28.

The end compartment 22 is in the form of a tub-shaped compartment and has
30 a mouth opening 29, which comprises a socket part that corresponds in shape with connectable part 27 on the intermediate compartment 23 to connect the assembly 21 together.

The end solid sub-unit 24 is formed as a substantially cylindrical body, having a connectable part 210 in the form of a socket engageable with either of the connectable parts 27 or 28 on intermediate capsule compartment 23. As shown in Fig. 2 the connectable part 210 on solid sub-unit 24 is connected to the part 28 on capsule compartment 23.

As with the dosage form of Fig. 1, a thermal weld is formed between the parts 25, 26, 27, 29, 28 and 210 at the region where these parts are in contact. Each of these parts 25, 26, 27, 29, 28 and 210 may additionally or alternatively be provided with features (not shown) such as respectively a convex circumferential bead and a circumferential groove into which the bead may fit, such that these interlocking parts may connect together by a snap fit engagement.

Fig. 3 shows another dosage form assembly 31. This assembly 31 comprises four sub-units 32, 33, 34, 35 in a linear assembly of an end solid sub-unit 32, an intermediate solid sub-unit 33, an intermediate capsule compartment 34 and an end solid sub-unit 35. The intermediate capsule compartment sub-unit 34 has a mouth opening 36, and the immediately adjacent rim 37 of this mouth opening 36 is formed as a plug connectable part. The end solid sub-unit 35 is substantially hemispherical and is formed as a closure cap for the tub-shaped intermediate capsule compartment 34, being formed at its lower end as a socket connectable part 38 which fits in a sealing engagement with the part 37. The closed lower end 34A of compartment 34 is externally provided with a socket connectable part 39.

The intermediate solid sub-unit 33 has its upper end formed as a plug connectable part 310 engageable with the part 39 of the compartment 34, and a lower end formed as a socket connectable part 311.

The end solid sub-unit 32 is in the form of a rounded bottomed cylinder having a plug connectable part 312 part that corresponds in shape with connectable part 311 on the intermediate compartment 33. Each of these parts 37, 38, 39, 310, 311, 312 may additionally or alternatively be provided with features (not shown) such as respectively a convex circumferential bead and a circumferential groove into which the bead may fit, such that these interlocking parts may connect together by a snap fit engagement.

Designated 313 is an alternative construction of the intermediate solid sub-unit 33, parts common with the sub-unit 33 being numbered correspondingly. The sub-unit 313 has an internal cylindrical bore 314 so that the sub-unit 313 is of a generally hollow cylindrical shape. The bore 314 may alternatively be of a longitudinally tapering e.g. generally cylindrical shape.

By connection of the various connectable parts 37, 38, 39, 310, 311, 312 the assembly 31 may be connected together along the axis shown.

Fig. 4 shows a dosage form 41 comprising three capsule compartments 42, 43, 44 linearly disposed in the assembled dosage form, in an arrangement comprising two end compartments 42, 44 at opposite ends of the line, and one intermediate compartment 43. All of the compartments 42, 43, 44 are substantially cylindrical but with an oval cross section across the longitudinal axis. The compartments 42, 43, 44 are substantially tub-shaped, i.e. each having a base closed by a base wall 42A, 43A, 44A, and each having side walls 42B, 43B, 44B extending upward from the base wall 42A, 43A, 44A, and an upper open mouth. Each of the compartments 42, 43 and 44 is made of a polymer such as polyvinyl alcohol polymer by injection moulding.

The compartments connect together by the base 42A, 43A of a first compartment 42, 43 fitting into the open mouth of an adjacent second compartment respectively 43, 44 so as to close the mouth, and such that the base wall 42A, 43A of the first compartment 42, 43 physically separates the first and second compartments 42, 43 and 44. In this assembly of compartments 42, 43, 44 the base part of an upper compartment 42, 43 comprises a plug part and the mouth opening of a lower compartment respectively 43, 44 comprises a socket.

Compartment 44 is an end compartment and has its mouth opening closed by the base wall 43A of compartment 43. The other end compartment 42 is closed by a closure 45 having a plug part 46 which is dimensioned to fit into the mouth opening of the compartment 42.

The base parts 42A and 43A, and the plug part 46, fit into the respective mouth openings of the compartments 43, 44 and 42. A weld is formed between the base parts 42A and 43A, the plug part 46, and the respective mouth openings of the compartments 43, 44 and 42, for example by the application of local heating or an

ultrasonic horn (not shown) to the region where these parts are in contact. Each of the base parts 42A, 43A, and the plug part 46, and the corresponding mouth openings of the compartments 43, 44 and 42 may additionally or alternatively be provided with features (not shown) such as a convex circumferential bead and a corresponding circumferential groove into which the bead may fit, such that the base part 42A, 43A and mouth openings of the compartments 43 and 44, and the plug part 46 and mouth opening of compartment 42 may connect together by a snap fit interlocking engagement overcoming the natural resilience of the polymer material of the base part and mouth opening.

10 The base parts 42A, 43A, 44A of the compartments and the mouth openings of the compartments 42, 43, 44, and the plug part 46 are all of common dimensions so that the compartments 42, 43 and 44 may be fitted together in other linear combinations, and so that the plug 45 may be used to close the mouth opening of any of the other compartments 42, 43 or 44.

15 Similarly, two or more than the three compartments 42, 43 or 44, may be
connected together in an analogous manner to that shown in Fig 4.

Fig. 5 shows another dosage form assembly 51. This assembly 51 also comprises three compartments 52, 53, 54 in a linear assembly of two end compartments 52, 54 and an intermediate compartment 53. The intermediate compartment 53 is made in the form of part compartment shells 53A and 53B, each part shell 53A, 53B comprising a closed end 53C and 53D and side walls 53E and 53F, with a mouth opening opposite the closed end. The mouth openings of the two part shells 53A and 53B are each provided respectively with a plug connectable part 55 and a socket connectable part 56. These part shells 53A, 53B connect together with their respective plug and socket parts 55 and 56 connecting to form the capsule compartment 53. Both of the closed ends 53C, 53D are externally provided with connectable plug parts 57, 58.

Each end compartment 52, 54 is in the form of a tub-shaped compartment and has a mouth opening, e.g. 59 being that of compartment 52, which comprises a
30 socket part that corresponds in shape with the connectable plug parts 57, 58 on the intermediate compartment 53 to connect the assembly 51 together.

As with the dosage form of Fig. 4, a weld is formed between the parts 55, 56, 57, 58 and the respective mouth openings of the compartments 52, 54, by the application of local heating or an ultrasonic horn (not shown) to the region where these parts are in contact. Each of these parts 55, 56, 57, 58 and the respective
 5 mouth openings of the compartments 52, 54 may additionally or alternatively be provided with features (not shown) such as respectively a convex circumferential bead and a circumferential groove into which the bead may fit, such that these interlocking parts may connect together by a snap fit engagement.

Each of the compartments 42, 43, 44, 52, 54 in Figs 4 and 5 may be made
 10 of the same or different polymer and may have the same or different drug release characteristics. The intermediate compartments respectively of Figs. 1 and 2 are more suitable for a modified release compartment, as dissolution or disruption of the end compartments 2, 4, 7 and 9 before the intermediate compartments 3 and 8 can occur without disturbance of these intermediate compartments.

Each of the compartments 42, 43, 44, 53, 54 and 55 in Figs 4 and 5 contains
 15 the same or different drug substance and/or formulation. This may for example be in the form of powder, granulates, or other solid forms. Alternatively the compartments may contain liquid, gel etc. formulations (not shown).

Fig. 6 shows another dosage form assembly 61. As shown in the
 20 longitudinal section Fig. 6A and the cross section Fig. 6B this comprises an assembly of an end capsule compartment 62 – linker 63 – end capsule compartment 64 in a linear arrangement. Each end compartment 62, 64 is suitably in the shape of a cylinder having one open end and one closed end. The closed end is in the form of a generally hemispherical end wall, forming an open ended “bucket” or “tub”
 25 shape. The side walls of each capsule compartment taper gently in a shallow conical fashion, the cross section being greatest at the open end. The central part 65 of the rounded end of each compartment 62, 64 is flattened over at least 5% of the end surface area to facilitate the application of ultrasonic energy during the welding operation. The wall of each capsule compartment 62, 64 is ca. 0.4 ± 0.05 mm thick
 30 in the cylindrical side walls of the compartment.

The “linker” 63 is provided in the form of a solid wall with oppositely facing surfaces 66, 67 extending generally transverse to the longitudinal direction of

Claims:

1. A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form is provided which
5 comprises a plurality of drug substance – containing sub-units each selected from capsule compartments which can release their drug substance in the gastro-intestinal environment, and solid sub-units comprising a solid matrix of a polymer which contains a drug substance, the polymer being soluble, dispersible or disintegrable in the patient's gastro-intestinal environment to thereby release the drug substance, the
10 sub-units being connected together in the assembled dosage form and being retained together by the connection at least prior to administration to a patient, wherein the connection is provided by a weld between parts of the assembled dosage form.
2. A dosage form according to claim 1 characterised by common interchangeable interconnectable parts so that the sub-units may be assembled in
15 various combinations using the same basic units of capsule compartments, solid sub-units or of solid sub-units and capsule compartments.
3. A dosage form according to claim 1 or 2 characterised in that the dosage form comprises a plurality of capsule compartments each bounded and physically separated from at least one adjacent compartment by a wall made of a
20 pharmaceutically acceptable polymer material, adjacent compartments being connected together in the assembled dosage form and being retained together by the connection at least prior to administration to a patient, one or more of the compartments containing a drug substance, and wherein the connection is provided by a weld between parts of the assembled dosage form.
- 25 4. A dosage form according to claim 3 characterised by two such capsule compartments.
5. A dosage form according to claim 1 or 2 characterised in that the pharmaceutical dosage form comprises a plurality of drug-containing sub-units connected together in the assembled dosage form and being retained together by the
30 connection at least prior to administration to a patient, at least one of the sub-units being a solid sub-unit comprising a solid matrix of a polymer which contains a drug substance, the polymer being soluble, dispersible or disintegrable in the patient's

opening of an adjacent capsule compartment so as to function as a closure for the mouth opening.

15. A dosage form according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that one or more capsule compartment is made closed and is in this closed form
- 5 connected with one or more adjacent sub-unit.
16. A dosage form according to any one of the preceding claims characterised by including one or more linker unit positioned between adjacent pairs of sub-units.
17. A dosage form according to claim 16 characterised in that at least one weld in the dosage form is between a sub-unit and a linker unit.
- 10 18. A dosage form according to claim 16 characterised in that the linker unit has one or two connectable opposite facing plug parts and which can connect in a plug and socket manner with the mouth opening of two capsule compartments to thereby form a capsule-linker-capsule assembly.
19. A dosage form according to any one of claims 16 to 18 characterised in that
- 15 the linker comprises a closure for a capsule compartment having one or more first and/or second connectable parts such that the first or second part on the closure may connect with respectively the second or first part on an adjacent sub-unit in a suitable configuration.
20. A dosage form according to any one of claims 16 to 19 characterised in that
- 20 an intermediate capsule compartment is present in the form of a generally cylindrical shape with two oppositely facing open ends, and two linkers connect via respectively one each of their plug connectable parts with an open end of the cylinder, leaving the other plug part available for connection to respectively another sub-unit.
- 25 21. A dosage form according to any one of claims 8 to 20 characterised in that adjacent parts of the dosage form between which the ultrasonic weld is formed are profiled and dimensioned to facilitate an ultrasonic shear joint.
22. A dosage form according to claim 21 characterised by plug and socket connectable parts comprising engaging tenon parts where the length of one tenon is
- 30 less than the length of the other tenon part, and under the ultrasonic welding operation the material of the parts can collapse until the tenon parts longitudinally engage.

23. A dosage form according to claim 22 characterised by comprising a capsule compartment – linker – capsule compartment in a linear arrangement and connected together by means of at least one ultrasonic weld formed between a capsule compartment and the linker.
- 5 24. A dosage form according to claim 23 characterised in that the wall of the capsule compartment is preferably ca. 0.3 – 0.5 mm, thick.
25. A dosage form according to claim 23 characterised in that the end compartments are each in the shape of a cylinder having one open end and one end closed by a generally hemispherical end wall, the side walls taper gently in a shallow conical fashion, the cross section being greatest at the open end, and the central part of the rounded closed end is flattened to facilitate the application of ultrasonic energy during the welding operation.
- 10 26. A dosage form according to any one of claims 16 to 25 characterised in that at least one of the connectable parts of the linker is a plug part which fits in a plug-and-socket manner into the open end of a capsule compartment.
- 15 27. A dosage form according to claim 26 characterised in that the linker is in the form of a solid wall with oppositely facing plug connectable parts.
28. A dosage form according to claim 26 or 27 characterised in that each plug part is provided with an abutment surface to define and limit the extent to which each plug part can extend into the open end of a capsule compartment by abutting against the rim of the open end of a capsule compartment when the plug part extends to a suitable extent into the capsule mouth.
- 20 29. A dosage form according to claim 28 characterised in that the linker comprises a generally cylindrical solid body, its opposite facing ends being plug parts, with two oppositely facing abutment surfaces each being a surface of a ledge formed around the circumference of the cylindrical body.
- 25 30. A dosage form according to any one of claims 16 to 29 characterised in that the linker is overall in the form of a cylindrical body flattened in its length direction and having diameter : length ratios in the range 4 : 1 to 1.5 : 1, with an end surface which is substantially planar over at least 50% of its extent.
- 30 31. A dosage form according to any one of claims 16 to 30 characterised by a capsule compartment wall in the shape of a cylinder having one open end and one

closed end, and at least 5% of the outer surface of the closed end is substantially planar.

32. A dosage form according to any one of the preceding claims characterised by parts made of a pharmaceutically acceptable polymer which is generally regarded
5 as safe for oral injection and is capable of being formed into the required shape.

33. A dosage form according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that one or more solid sub-units and/or capsule compartments are substantially immediate release.

34. A dosage form according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in
10 that one or more solid sub-units and/or capsule compartments are sustained release or pulsed release.

35. A dosage form according to any one of the preceding claims characterised by two or more capsule compartments which differ in thickness between compartments so that thicker walled compartments disrupt more slowly than thinner
15 walled compartments.

36. A dosage form according to any one of the preceding claims characterised by one or more capsule compartments which have areas or points of weakness which preferentially dissolve.

37. A process for manufacturing a dosage form according to any one of the
20 preceding claims which comprises a capsule compartment – linker – capsule compartment in a linear arrangement, characterised by the steps of first filling a first capsule compartment with a suitable quantity of drug substance; insertion of a first plug part of a linker into the open end of the first capsule compartment and welding this in place; filling a second capsule compartment containing a suitable
25 quantity of drug substance; insertion of the opposite, second, plug part of the linker into the open end of the second capsule compartment and welding the linker and second capsule compartment together.

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(57) Abstract: A multi-component pharmaceutical dosage form comprising a plurality of drug substance - containing sub-units, being capsule compartments and/or solid sub-units comprising a solid matrix of a polymer which contains a drug substance, the sub-units being connected together in the assembled dosage form by a weld between parts of the assembled dosage form.

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Fig.1.

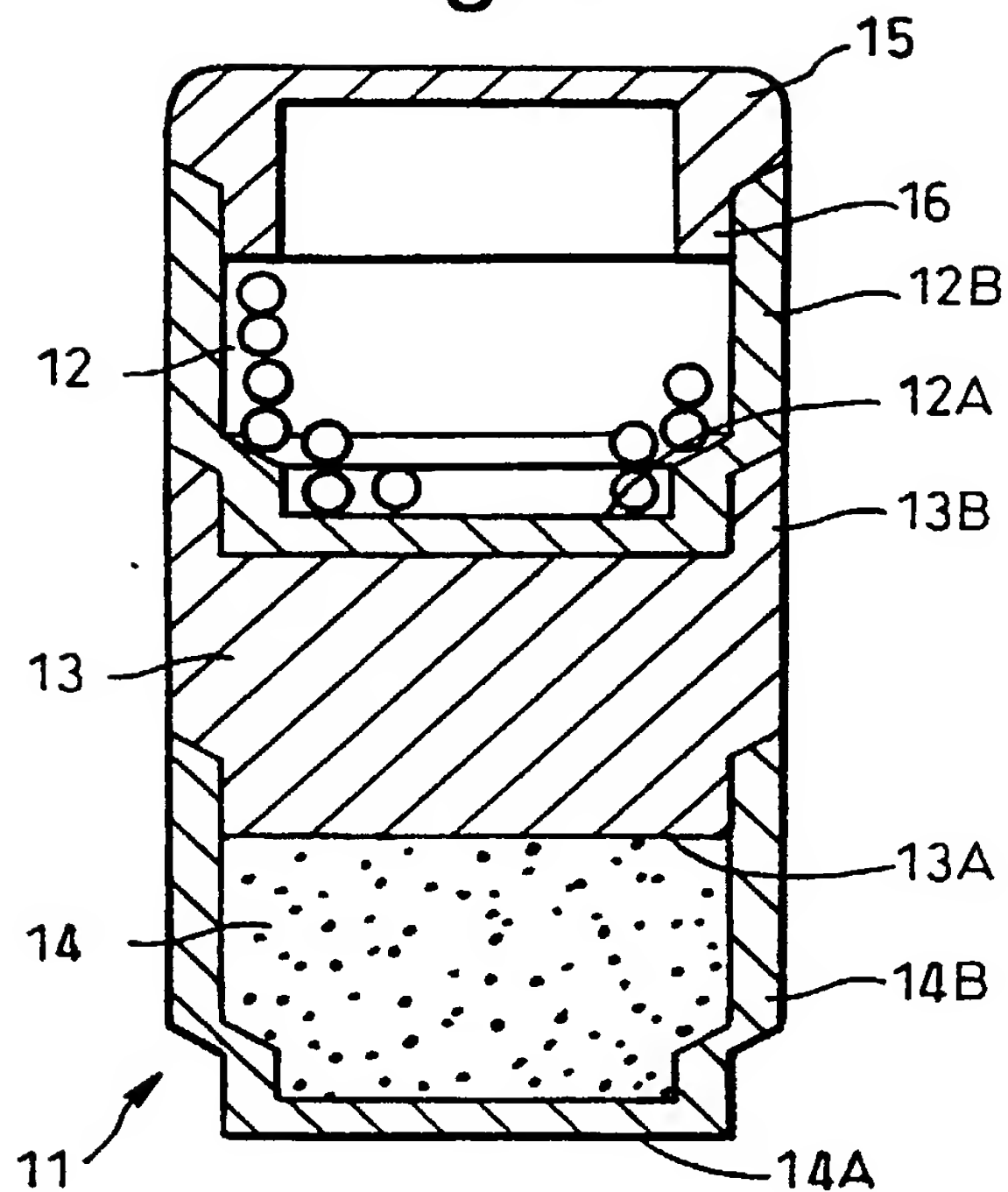
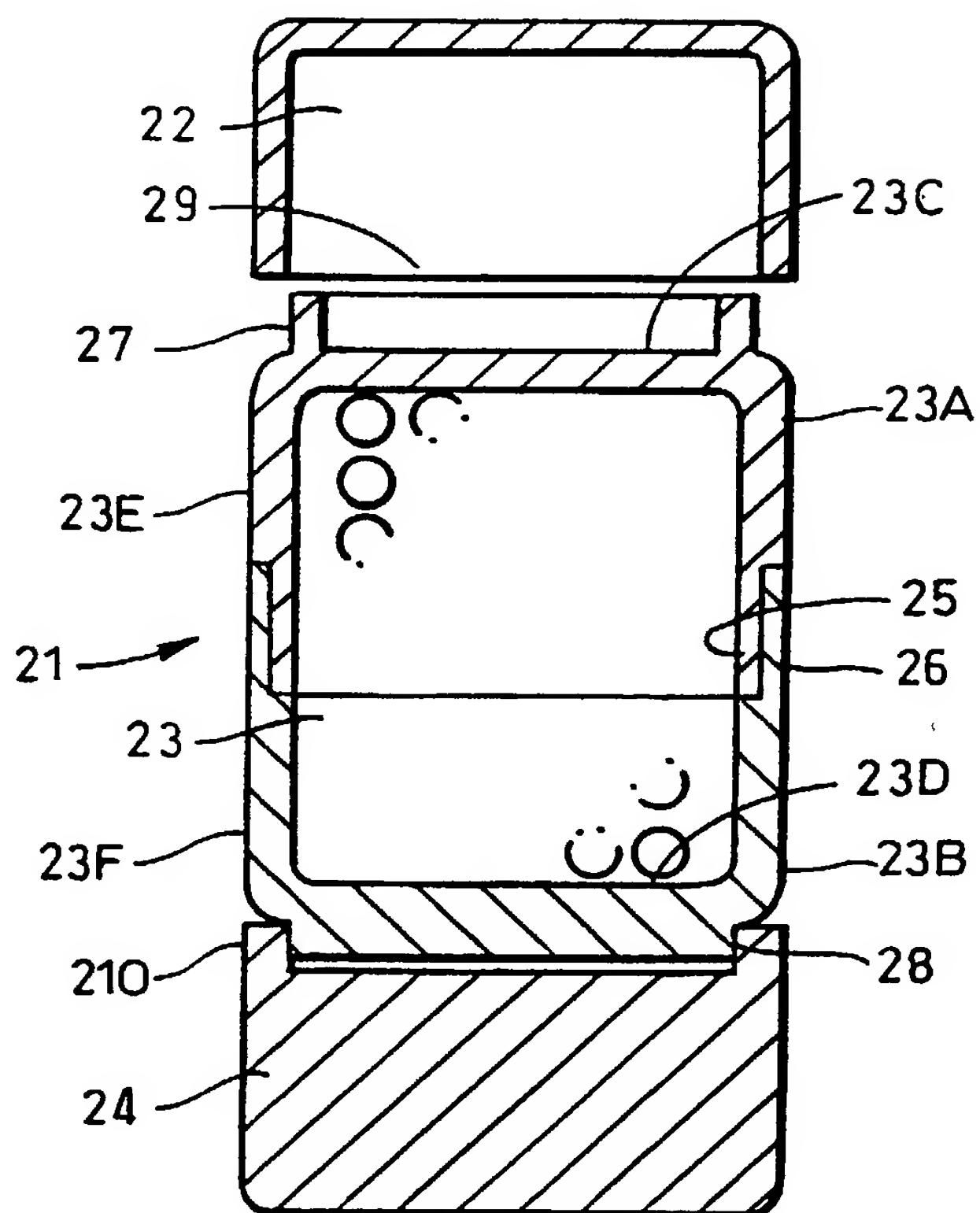


Fig.2.



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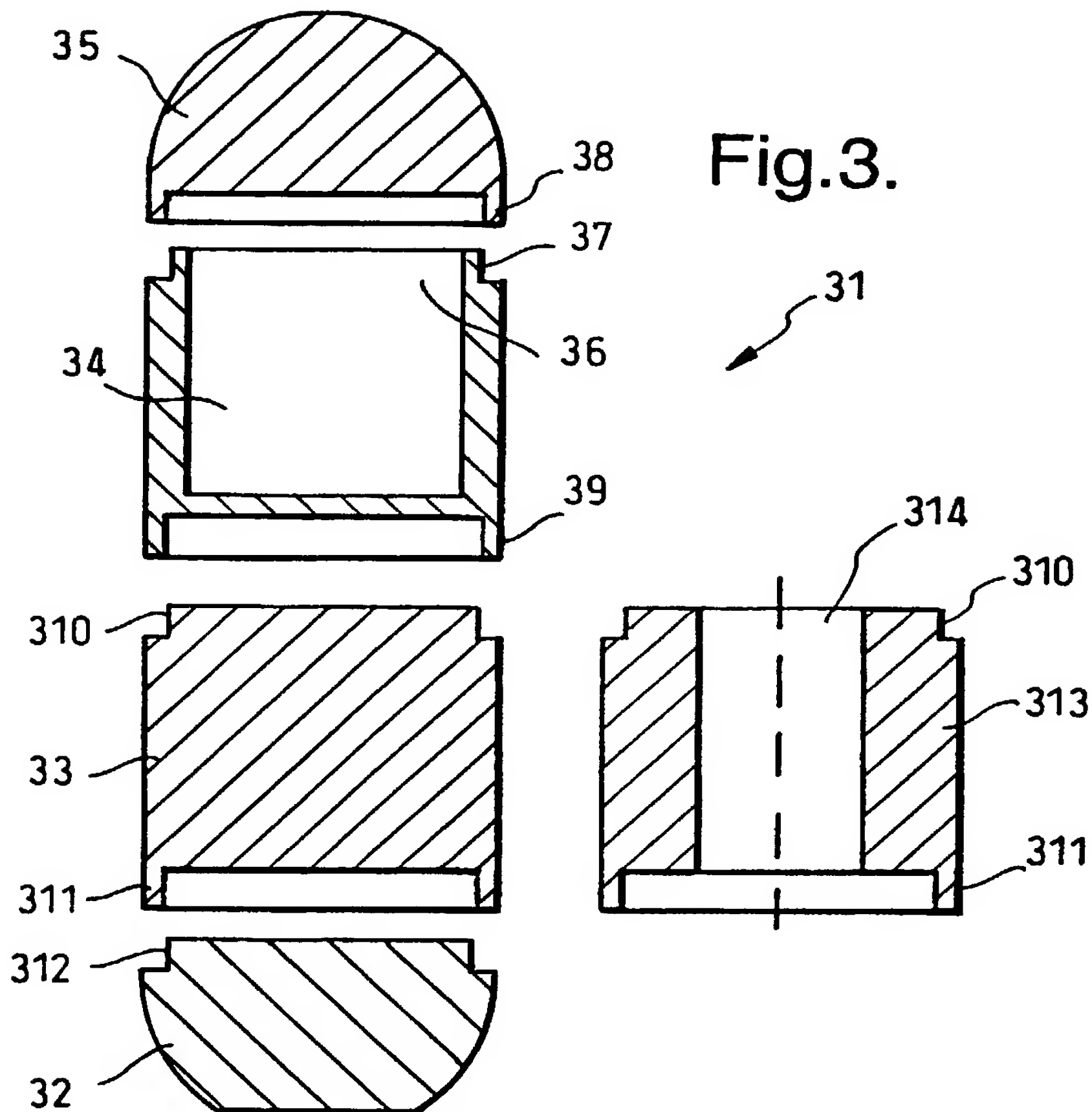


Fig.4.

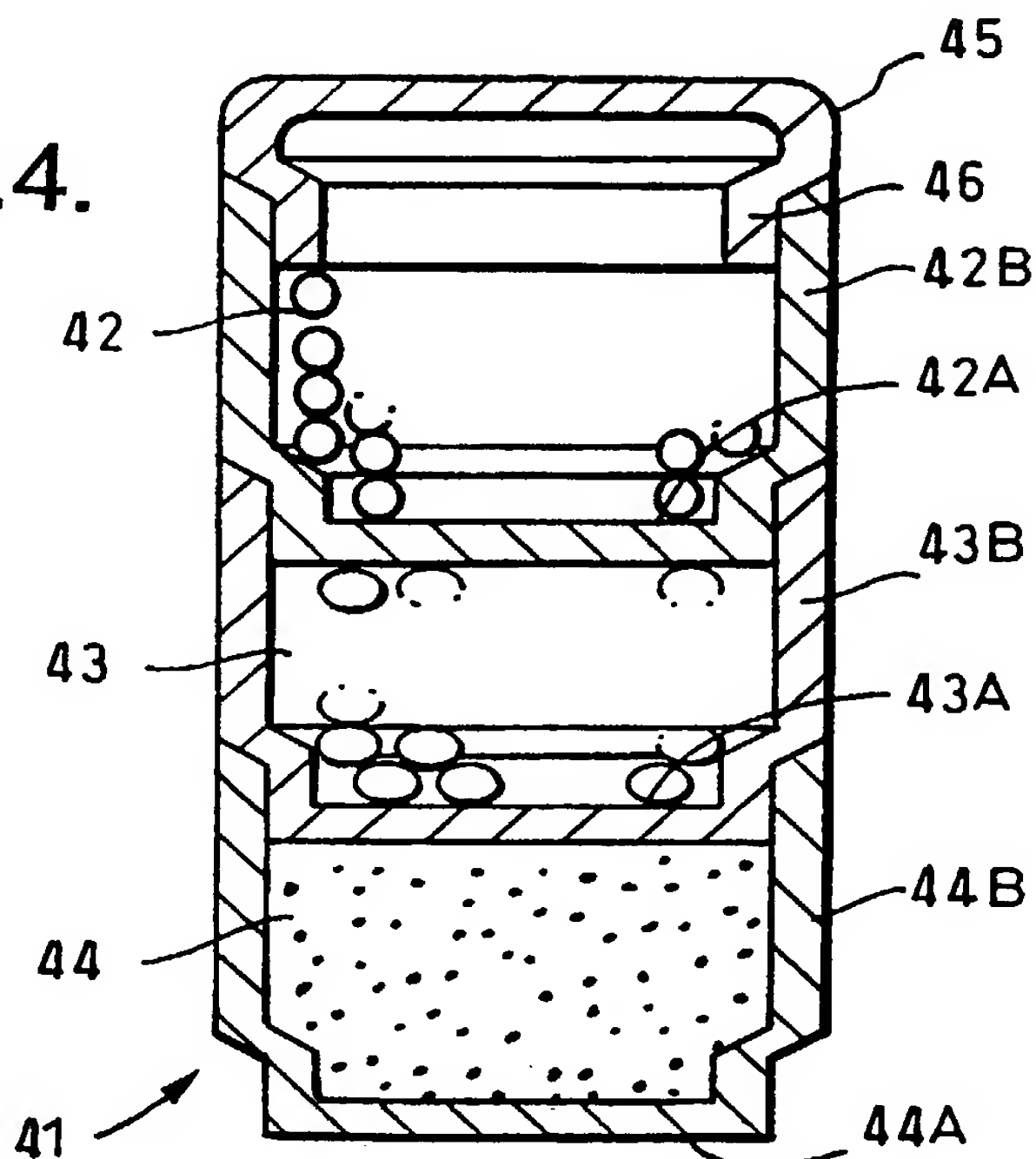


Fig.5.

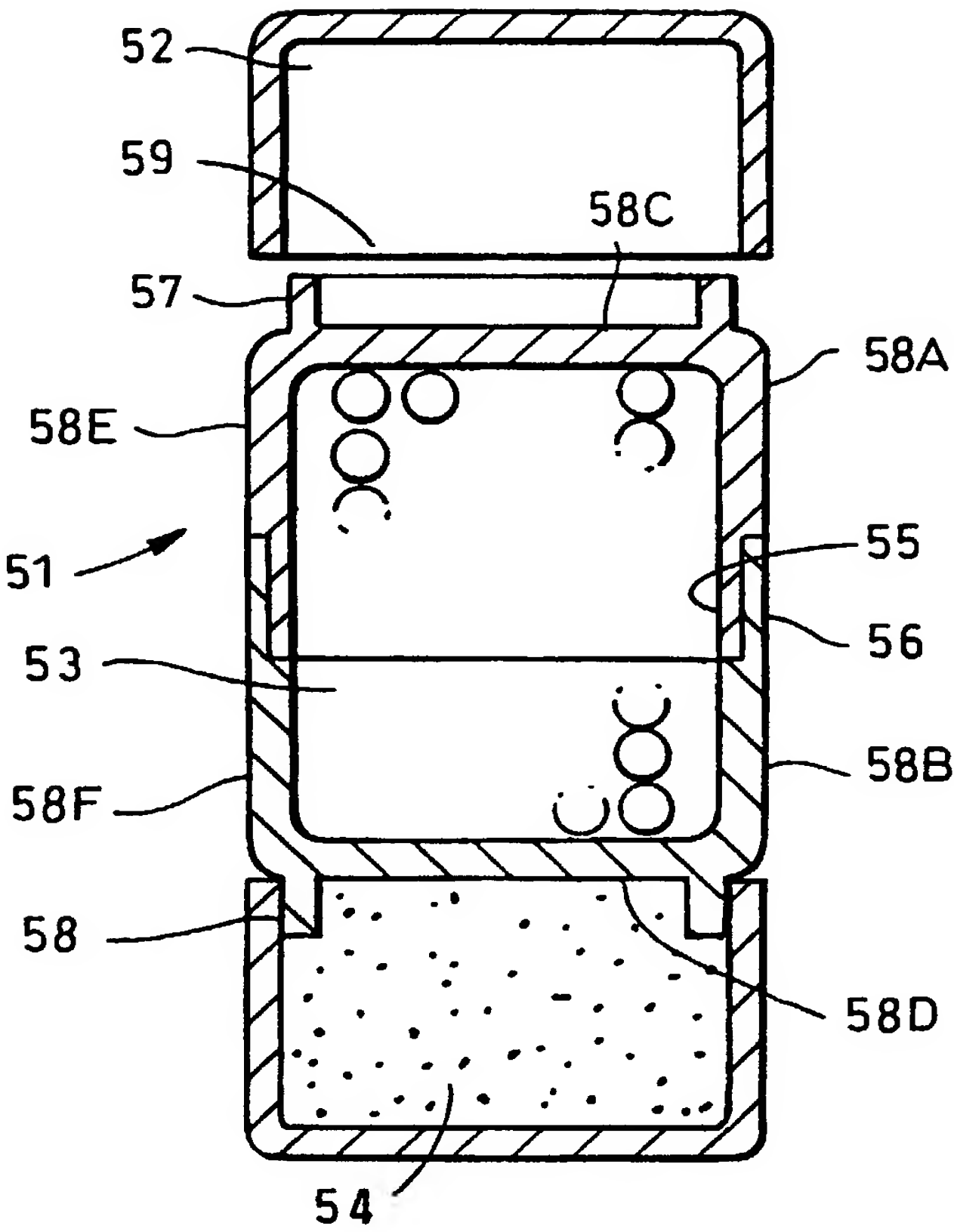


Fig.6A.

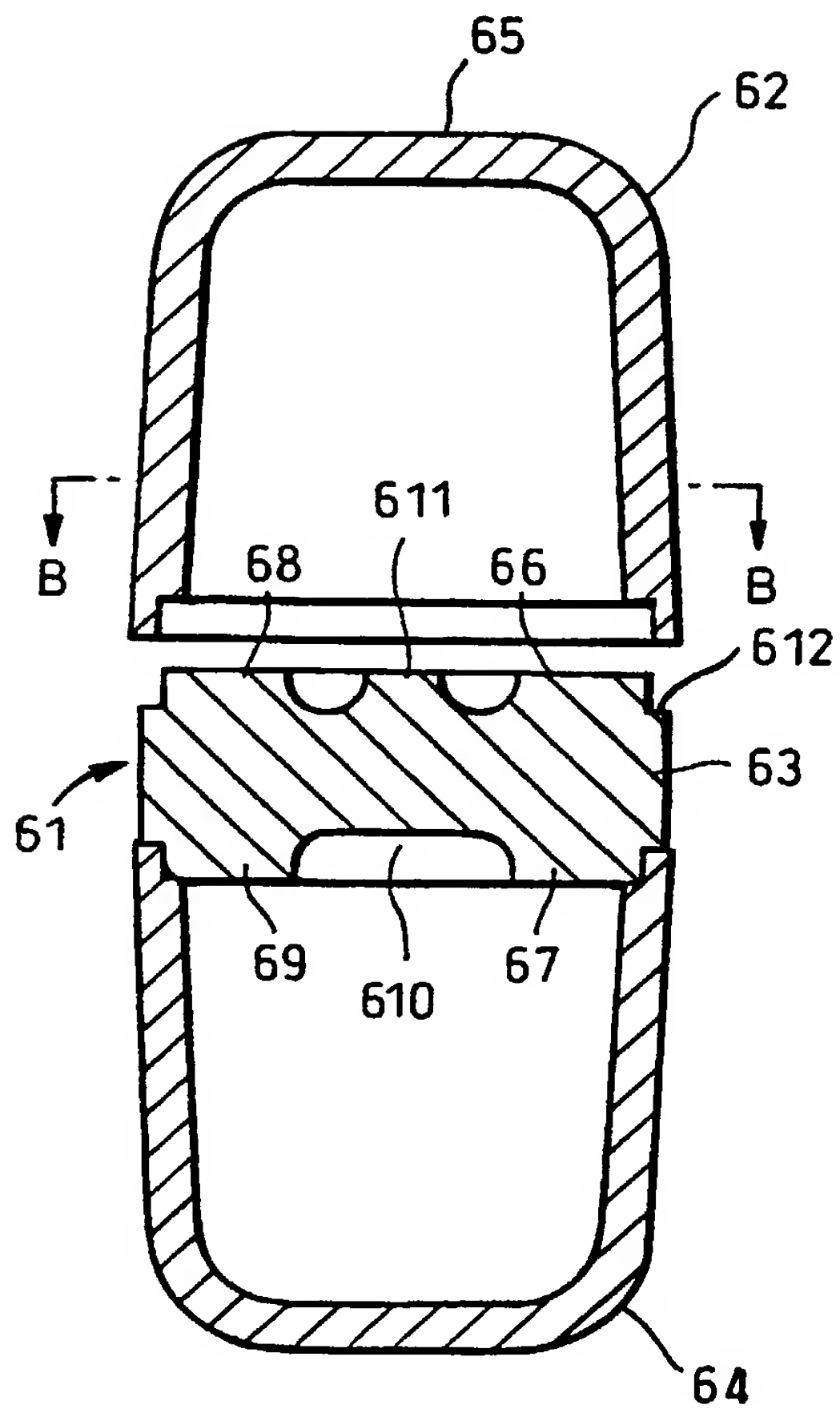


Fig.6B.

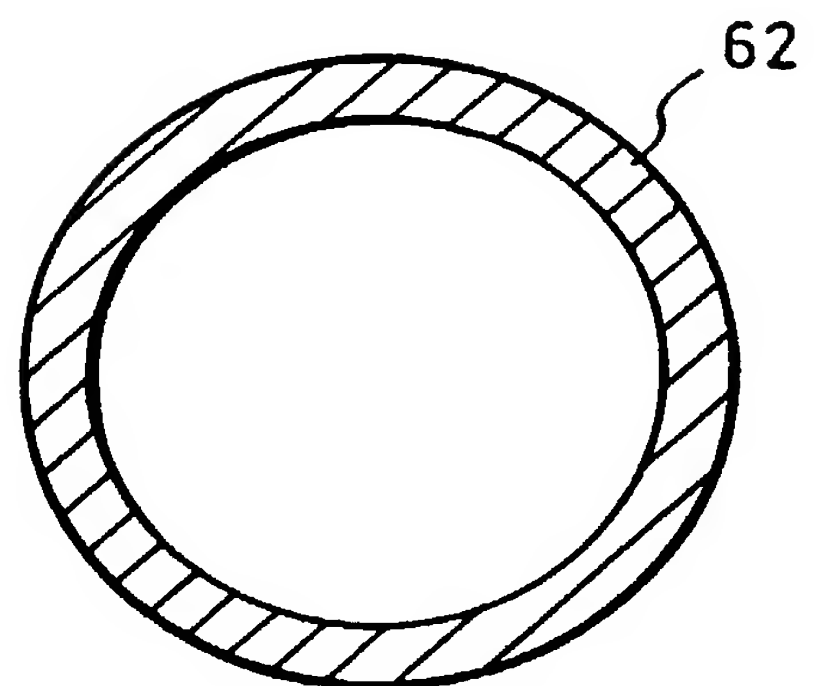


Fig.6C.

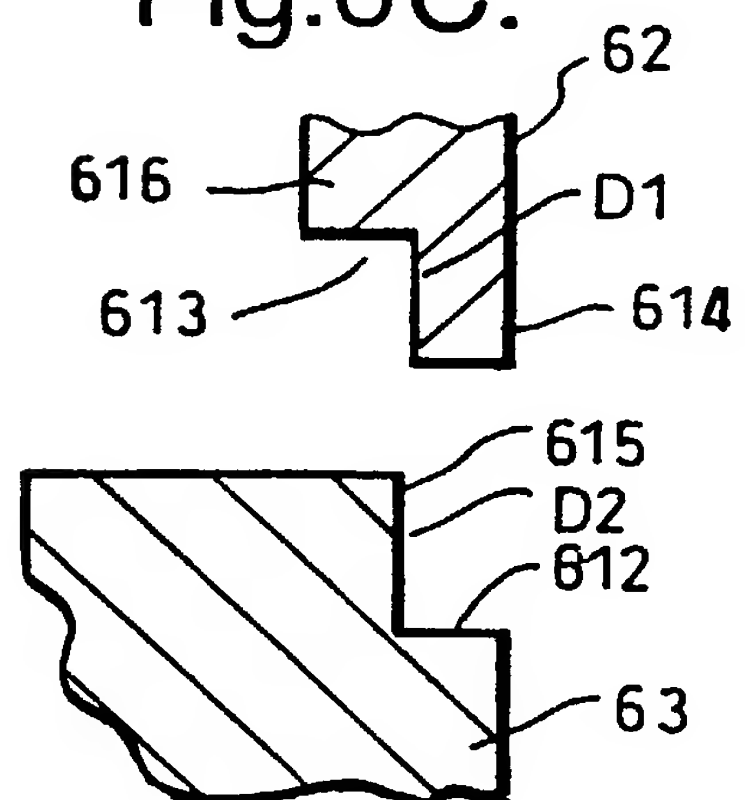
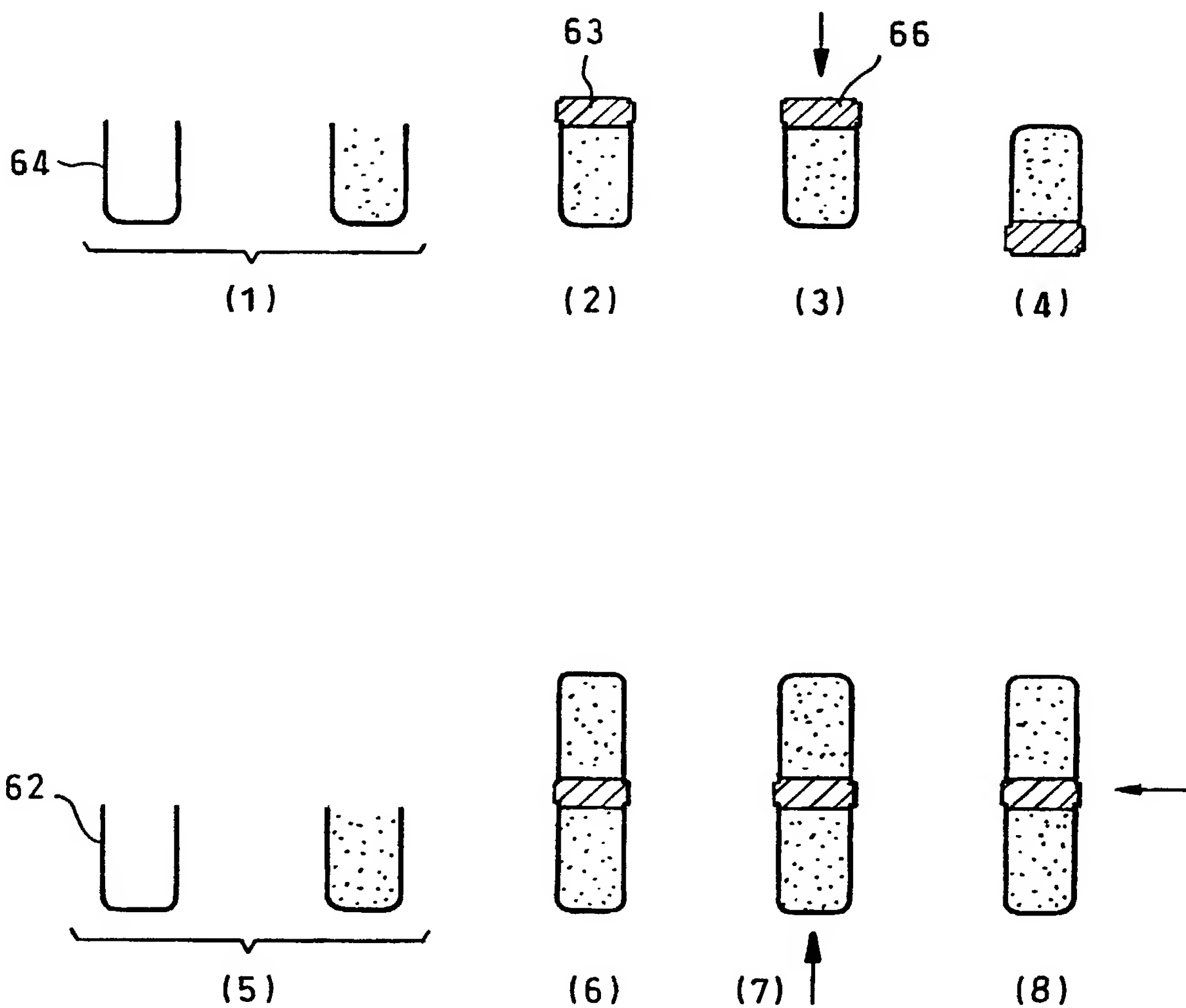


Fig.7.



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

MULTI-COMPONENT PHARMACEUTICAL DOSAGE FORM

the specification of which (check one)

- ☐ is attached hereto.
☒ was filed on 27 July 2000 as Serial No. PCT/EP00/07295
and was amended on (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or Inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Number	Country	Filing Date	Priority Claimed
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9917774.3	Great Britain	30 July 1999	Yes
9917775.0	Great Britain	30 July 1999	Yes
9917777.6	Great Britain	30 July 1999	Yes

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number	Filing Date
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I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s) or Section 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

Serial No.	Filing Date	Status
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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that wilful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such wilful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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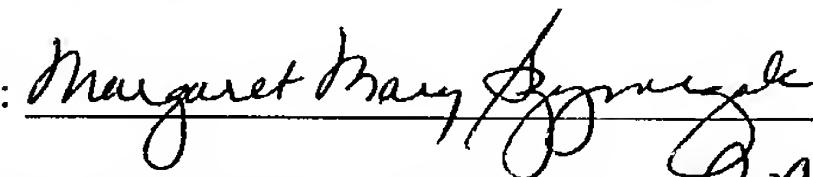
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